



**(U//FOUO) SID Around the World: A Country the Size of Maryland**

FROM: SIGINT Communications  
Unknown  
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(U) What country is about the size of Maryland, has a hundred breweries and is home to three languages? No, it's not Switzerland. The answer: Belgium.

(U) So what are the three languages? French (spoken by the Walloons in the southern half of the country), Flemish (a dialect of Dutch-- spoken in the northern half), and a small area near the German border where they speak... well, you know. (Plus, Brussels, right in the middle, is bilingual.) When you mention Belgium, people often give you a quizzical look. They don't have a clear idea of what it's about. It's complicated!

(U) What's Belgium noted for? Well, for many people, food and drink. The national dish is mussels and fries (pommes frites). You know about the waffles. If you want to be popular, give someone Belgian chocolates. And beer is the national drink (yes, even among those who speak French). Belgian beers are unique-- several varieties are brewed nowhere else in the world. A curiosity is that Belgians often divide their beers into "good" and "evil". In the former category you have Trappist ales (brewed by Trappist monks) and beers named for numerous saints. In the latter, you have such potions as "Piraat" (Pirate), and "Fin du Monde" (End of the World).

(C) What is SID doing there in Belgium? Well, there are SID representatives at NATO political headquarters in Brussels and at NATO's military headquarters, based near Mons. (Some rue the fact that years ago Charles De Gaulle had a falling out with NATO, resulting in the HQ relocating from Paris in 1967.) In Mons, some representatives work in an underground bunker. Administratively, these people fall under NCEUR (NSA/CSS Europe, based in Stuttgart, Germany).

(U) NATO, EU, Romance language, Germanic language... is Belgium the cultural crossroads of Europe?



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